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RATHENAU FROM PIX

AT HER NIPA-HUT DOORSTEP, A PORT MORESBY BELLE BASKS IN NEW GUINEA'S SUN (Bulletin No. 5)

Bulletin No. 1, February 19, 1951

Maracaibo Gave Venezuela Name and Fortune

VENEZUELA'S name and fortune both stem from torrid Lake Maracaibo, southern extension of the Bay of Venezuela which deeply indents South America's northernmost coast. Name and fortune are reason enough for putting the region's profile along with that of its discoverer and the discovery date on Venezuela's newest postage stamps.

Issued well after the 450th anniversary they commemorate, the eleven new stamps, six of them for air-mail use, bear the likeness of Alonzo de Ojeda and the dates 1499-1949. In October, 1499, only seven years after Columbus found the New World, Ojeda found and explored Lake Maracaibo.

Venezuela—Little Venice

No forests of oil derricks (illustration, next page) greeted the Spanish seafarers. Indian villages of primitive grass huts built on stilts projected from the lake's shores then as now. Each village was a Venezuela (little Venice), some of the crew commented. Thus the modern republic got its name.

The visitors doubtless noticed oil on Maracaibo's waters. Four centuries before the Machine Age it meant little, however, so they moved on in search of such treasures as gold and pearls. Not until 1913 was the region's first commercial oil well sunk. Still another decade passed before large-scale operations began on what is now known to be one of the world's major deposits of crude petroleum.

Caribbean tidewater flows and ebbs along the shallow, narrow strait on which the port city of Maracaibo is located. It enters the northern part of the 110-mile-long lake, making it brackish. The southern half, fed by many rivers, stays fresh.

The lake, 60 miles across at its widest bulge, covers an area somewhat larger than Connecticut. The mountain-rimmed Maracaibo Basin, happy hunting ground for oil prospectors, is a land-and-water area of six or more times the lake's expanse.

An Inland Waterway

Oil derricks are thickest in a 50-mile stretch along the lake's east shore. Some cluster in the lake as much as eight miles offshore, while others pump the black crude from wells as far inland. The Maracaibo Basin still accounts for three-fourths of Venezuela's oil production, even with the recent opening of many new wells far to the east. Venezuela is the world's second-largest exporter of oil, after the United States. New wells are being constantly added to its fields.

Lake Maracaibo and its larger tributaries comprise a Venezuelan inland waterway second only to the country's Orinoco River system. Small boats, ferries, and tankers ply its length and breadth, and make Maracaibo an important port for coffee as well as crude oil.

Maracaibo has grown from a jungle town to a city of 140,000 people

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ALFRED T. PALMER

THE MOUNTAINS OF VENEZUELA SLOPE DIRECTLY INTO THE CARIBBEAN AT LA GUAIRA

Climate depends on elevation more than on latitude along this part of the coast of Venezuela (Bulletin No. 1). About 10,000 persons swelter in the sea-level heat of La Guaira, the port in the distance. But the highway climbs the mountain range and, six miles inland, reaches Caracas, the capital, where 270,000 persons enjoy an average year-round temperature of 70 degrees Fahrenheit at an altitude of 3,000 feet. In the near distance lies the town of Maiquetía.

Bulletin No. 2, February 19, 1951

Bleak House, Dickens Landmark, up for Sale

IN THE midst of today's fast-changing England, Dickens enthusiasts are given an opportunity to preserve a link with the vanished era of *David Copperfield, The Old Curiosity Shop,* and the immortal Pickwick of *Pickwick Papers.*

A "for sale" sign has been put up on Bleak House, one of a number of residences in the little resort town of Broadstairs on the Strait of Dover in which Charles Dickens spent part of his busy writing life.

Bleak House of Fiction Stood in Hertfordshire

The sale of Bleak House might offer a solution to the old problem of setting up a formal Dickens shrine. For in this house high on the Kentish cliffs overlooking the strait the English novelist wrote much of *David Copperfield* and *The Old Curiosity Shop.*

However, Dickens did not write his novel, *Bleak House,* at Broadstairs; nor did he use that town as the site of the "Bleak House" of his story dramatizing the tragedy of lives caught in the legal tangles of England's chancery courts. The setting for the Bleak House of the novel was St. Albans, Hertfordshire, on the other side of London.

Broadstairs has a wealth of other associations with Dickens. The quiet watering place, to which he first came in 1837, was the novelist's favorite resort. He described it as having "a good sea, fresh breezes, fine sands, and pleasant walks—one of the freshest and purest little places in the world."

From bustling London, the large Dickens family often fled to Broadstairs, where they took an active part in the gay life of the town.

In addition to the residence, Bleak House (it was called Fort House in those days), there are four or five other places there in which the writer lived, worked, and played. In one of them he finished *Pickwick Papers;* in another he wrote the final chapters of *Nicholas Nickleby.*

In fact, Dickens had so many connections with the town that one modern householder, it is said, put up on his dwelling a sign stating that "Dickens did *not* live here." Houses known to have been associated with the author have been marked by the Dickens Fellowship. Every year Broadstairs holds a Dickens Festival.

Broadstairs Surf Supplied Sea Scenes

Numerous buildings in the south of England are identified with Dickens's novels. Among them is the Leather Bottle at Cobham (illustration, next page), in north Kent, near Rochester. This picturesque old inn figures in *Pickwick Papers.*

It was part of Dickens's writing method to draw on his own life and memories for characters and settings for his novels. Some of the most graphic sea scenes in his books came out of such experiences as watching storm waves break on the beach at Broadstairs, and taking solitary walks along its cliffs by starlight.

One sea-front dwelling, known as the Dickens House, served as model

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in thirty years. It is Venezuela's oil center, and oil provides more than half the republic's revenue, making it the one Latin American nation completely free of foreign debt.

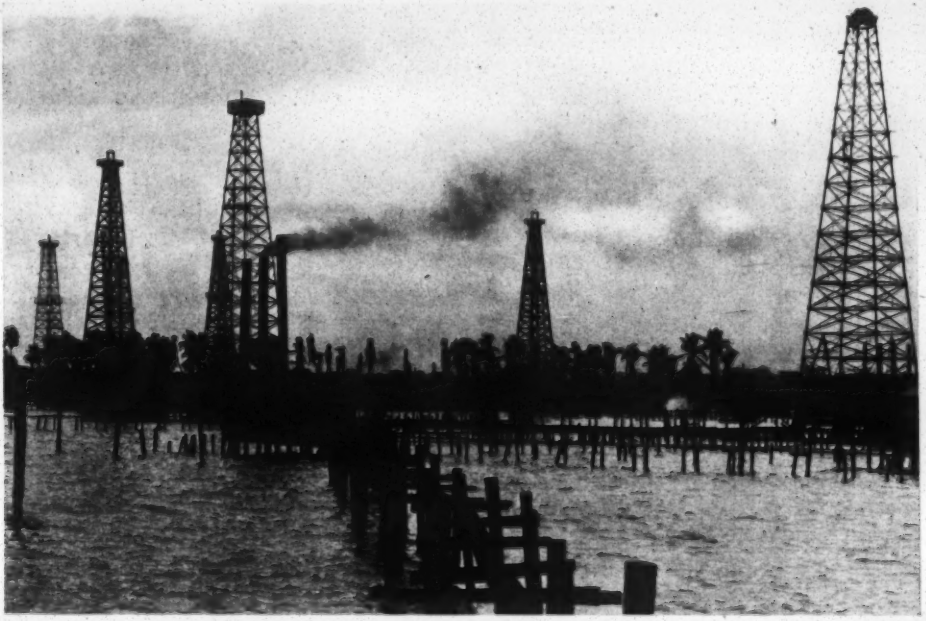
The shallowness of the strait on which the port lies, however, made it necessary from the start to ship the crude oil in shallow-draft tankers to deepwater ports on the near-by Netherlands islands of Curaçao and Aruba. There it is processed in two of the world's largest refineries, then loaded onto big ocean-going tankers.

In the past few years, Maracaibo port has been expanded to surpass La Guaira (illustration, inside cover) and all other Venezuelan ports. Old docks have been widened, new piers have been added, and the channel dredged to open the port to ships of 25-foot draft. Plans call for eventual deepening to 38 feet—enough to handle big ocean tankers and enable the country's growing army of oil technicians to refine their own petroleum.

NOTE: Lake Maracaibo is shown on the National Geographic Society's map of South America. Write the Society's headquarters, Washington 6, D. C., for a price list of maps.

For additional information, see "Search for the Scarlet Ibis in Venezuela," in the *National Geographic Magazine* for May, 1950; "Jungle Journey to the World's Highest Waterfall," November, 1949; "Caracas, Cradle of the Liberator," April, 1940*; and "I Kept House in the Jungle," January, 1939*. *(Issues marked with an asterisk are included on a special list of Magazines available to teachers in packets of ten for $1.00; issues unmarked are 50¢ a copy.)*

See also, in the GEOGRAPHIC SCHOOL BULLETINS, February 20, 1950, "Venezuela May Prove Land of Hope for DP's"; and "Venezuela's New Rulers Control Rich Nation," January 3, 1949.



PHILIP D. GENDREAU

OIL DERRICKS MARCH INTO THE SHALLOW WATERS OF LAKE MARACAIBO

Piles supporting walkways to the derricks suggest the stilts on which primitive houses are built. Villages of such over-the-water homes, when first seen by Europeans in this area, prompted the remark that each was like a little Venice, or Venezuela. Thus the country was named.

Atomic Tests Echo in Nevada Ghost Towns

THE thunderclap of the atom has come to a silent land where only the long-dead echoes of forty-niner wagon trains keep the jack rabbits company.

In dry desolation and bitter dust, ringed by sun-bleached ghost towns of the southern Nevada basin, the Atomic Energy Commission has marked off its newest testing ground. Progress reports on new atomic weapons are being written in fire and blast over a 5,000-square-mile reservation in one of the emptiest areas of the United States.

Las Vegas Only Town Near by

The creosote bush lives in sandstone gullies and alkali mud flats, but little else. Even sagebrush gives up the ghost. Scant water comes off the jumbled, rocky hills. Defeated by the burning midsummer sun, it soon disappears in salt-encrusted sinks. Blue mountains rear in the distance to snow-whitened peaks, but on the flats and in the gulches there is only uninhabited wilderness.

The Las Vegas Bombing and Gunnery Range, where atomic tests are taking place, lies in the south-pointing wedge which Nevada drives between Utah and Arizona to the east and California to the west. The range begins some 40 miles north and slightly west of the unghostlike city of Las Vegas (illustration, next page). It covers a tract of land which, if it were perfectly square, would stretch 70 miles on each side—more than 3,000,000 acres in all.

Hollow-cheeked, red-eyed gold rushers cursed this blistering barrenness as they drove their oxen westward toward El Dorado in 1849. Prowling Indians raided the desert convoys, leaving a trail of fire-blackened wagons, looted household goods, and the bones of men and animals.

Then gold and a treasure in silver were discovered in Nevada. A tide of miners flowed back from California. Towns sprang up in the desert—Virginia City with the Comstock Lode, Gold Hill, Silver City, and a hundred other diggings. They lived through the roaring '60's and '70's, a few others rocketed to boom in the gold rush of the early 1900's, and then they were gone.

Death Valley and Valley of Fire

Today two paved highways reach into the desert from Las Vegas to straddle the new atomic proving ground. One skirts the range containing 11,910-foot Charleston Peak, which guards the reservation on the south and provides a skier's playground in winter.

To the west, beyond a fork which leads into California's near-by Death Valley, are the gold-rush ghost cities of Rhyolite and Bullfrog. Amid their crumbling skeletons of stores, schools, and saloons, an ancient railroad station has been converted into a night club. A museum houses relics of the days of forty-nine.

North from Las Vegas, the other highway borders the bombing range on the east and goes through the little towns of Moapa, Alamo, and Cali-

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for the home of David Copperfield's kindly great-aunt, Betsey Trotwood.

Three centuries before Dickens lived there Broadstairs was a noted shipbuilding town. From its yard were launched ships for the navy of Henry VIII and of Queen Elizabeth, vessels for trade with the Indies—East and West—as well as small boats for coastwise traffic.

Since Dickens's day, Broadstairs has expanded with an ever-increasing throng of summer vacationers. Visitors interested in its Dickens association have descended on the little resort from all over the world. At the outbreak of World War II, Broadstairs was a sizable town, credited with a population of about 14,000.

During the war, Bleak House escaped damage from the bombs that rained down on this projecting curve of the Kentish shore which came to be known as "Hell's Corner." The town, however, was badly battered.

NOTE: Broadstairs may be located on the Society's map of The British Isles.

See also, "A Stroll to London," in the *National Geographic Magazine* for August, 1950; "Preservation of England's Historic and Scenic Treasures," April, 1945*; Britain Just Before the Storm," August, 1940; "Time and Tide on the Thames," February, 1939*; and "Some Forgotten Corners of London," February, 1932.

EWING GALLOWAY

A DICKENS CHARACTER DRAWS REAL-LIFE GUESTS TO A KENTISH INN

With strokes of his magic pen, Dickens added to the charms of the picturesque village of Cobham an extra touch that attracts many visitors. His use of its inn, the Leather Bottle, as a refuge for a character in Pickwick Papers has brought the little tavern fame—and consequent customers—for more than a century. The Dickens Room contains pictures and souvenirs connected with the novelist, and is a sort of informal museum in his honor.

Bulletin No. 4, February 19, 1951

Chocolate Re-Joins the Army on Korean Front

CHOCOLATE—that sweet, brown confection made from ground cacao beans—is once again at the battle front. It is taking up its old wartime service of giving extra nourishment to the American soldier—this time fighting in winter-bound Korea.

The popular quick-energy food is considered so important to the GI that it is now included in every operational ration issued by the Department of Defense.

Is Favored Flavor in Ration Packs

Food Packet Survival Arctic, for example, provides each man with no less than four chocolate bars a day—two with almonds. Soldiers going to the front lines for eight to ten hours are issued two one-ounce bars in their Food Packet Individual Assault. Ration C—the basic canned operational ration—offers both chocolate and cocoa disks. (Cocoa is cacao powdered, and with part of the fat content removed.)

Three-fourths of the candy included in the Five-in-One Ration, designed for the use of groups of soldiers, contains chocolate. The Ration Supplement Sundries Pack, for 100 men, includes 200 two-ounce chocolate and 48 two-ounce chocolate-covered candy bars.

The fighting man in Korea is getting not only additional energy with his chocolate but an appetizing food as well. This was not entirely true during World War II, in spite of the fact that millions of chocolate bars were consumed across the globe in the form of Emergency Ration D. This ration—containing four ounces of chocolate and some 600 calories—was especially designed to taste "no better than an unsalted baked potato." The recipe was dreamed up in order to keep the soldier from eating it as candy.

The army's new chocolate policy is to give the men the nourishing food in the form of sweets they have eaten and enjoyed since they were children. In encouraging the use of chocolate the military may well have in mind the words of the Spanish explorer, Hernán Cortés, who wrote in the 16th century, "A single cup of this rich drink gives a man sufficient strength to march all day."

Not Generally Used until 19th Century

Although Cortés recognized the energy value of chocolate, he did not care for its taste as the Aztec Indians prepared it. After he introduced the product of the native American cacao tree into Spain in 1528 it was used primarily as a medicine and was far too expensive for anyone except the wealthy.

An unknown genius added sugar to give the chocolate its first wide taste appeal, but it was not until the 19th century that the price fell low enough to make it a popular beverage with all classes. In the United States alone, raw cacao imports leaped from 500,000 pounds in 1780 to more than 600,000,000 pounds by 1946.

Cacao was used as a drink long before anyone thought of eating it.

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ente. Then comes Cathedral Gorge, a fantastic jumble of caves and gullies, towering pillars and columned cliffs eroded from chalky clay.

At Alamogordo, New Mexico, the first atomic bomb was set off in a valley known for centuries as El Jornado del Muerto—"the way of death." Hard by Nevada's new atom-testing range is another appropriate landmark: flaming canyon walls of red sandstone, where primitive Indians carved strange symbols and pictures. Its name is the Valley of Fire.

NOTE: The area of the atomic-testing range may be located on the Society's map of the Southwestern United States.

For additional information, see "Nevada, Desert Treasure House" and "Land of Sagebrush and Silver" (20 color photographs), in the *National Geographic Magazine* for January, 1946*.

W. ROBERT MOORE

AS IN RENO, THE MAIN STREET OF LAS VEGAS IS LINED WITH CLUBS

In Nevada, only Reno is larger than "Vegas," the city nearest the new atomic proving ground in the southern part of the state. Also near by is Hoover Dam. Its construction in the '30's started boom times for Las Vegas. Today thousands of tourists every year visit the area.

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Bulletin No. 5, February 19, 1951

Papuan Wilds Rocked by Volcanic Eruptions

IN mid-January New Guinea's Mount Lamington "blew its top" with a series of volcanic eruptions which claimed an estimated 4,000 lives. Lesser explosions followed, flinging fire, smoke, and hot ash into the surrounding jungle. Gray dust rained on Port Moresby (illustration, cover), 100 miles to the southwest. At press time a new eruption rocked the area.

Mount Lamington is hidden in the "green hell" of the Papuan jungle where the violent abandon of nature was matched during the early days of World War II by the fighting between Americans and Japanese. Along the Kokoda Trail, which lies within decapitated Lamington's shadow, the GI of 1942 pushed himself and his war machines up and down steep ravines, across malarial sinks, through dripping, devouring equatorial vegetation.

Mountains and Swamps

Non-human enemies with a thousand hands clutched at the American fighting man. He finally met the Japanese—in the lofty reaches of the Owen Stanley Mountains, on the beaches at Buna, and along the trails to Sanananda and Lae. He forced the Jap to give way, but nature herself was never conquered and little altered.

Papua is a territory of the Commonwealth of Australia. It stretches like a tail off the back of the prehistoric-bird shape of New Guinea. Bony ridges of the Owen Stanley Range and steaming swamps along rivers and coast lines isolate areas from one another.

In mountain pockets and seashore villages live some 330,000 natives—a blend of Papuan and Melanesian—who are among the earth's last Stone Age peoples. Clannish, warlike, and cannibalistic in tradition, if not always in practice, they have a history of fierce resistance to intrusion on their domains.

In contrast to Papua's rich tropical regions, large portions of its 90,540 square miles are poor and incapable of supporting the population. Where extensive cultivation is possible, European planters grow coconuts and rubber trees while experimenting with such crops as coffee, cacao, cotton, and sugar. Natives tend small village gardens, as well as work the plantations.

Australian Umbrella

Since World War II sheep grazing has increased in the malaria-free valleys, and the quest for oil continues. Plans are afoot to harvest lumber from Papua's extensive forests and harness water power from numerous rivers that race down the mountain slopes to the Gulf of Papua and the Solomon Sea.

Papua's untamed and largely undeveloped condition can be charged to defensive diplomacy as well as difficult geography. Annexed by Great Britain in 1888 at the insistence of her Australian colonies, British New Guinea, including Papua, served for many years as a land umbrella to shield the continent below it.

To keep it neutralized and thus a protective buffer between Asia and

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In recent years, however, it has been served as a food much more often than as a beverage.

Diseases of the cacao tree are now proving a threat to the supply. The cacao industry on the African Gold Coast, producer of more than half the world's chocolate, is threatened with extinction within a decade if the swollen shoot virus is not checked there. Witch-broom disease is taking its toll in Central and South America.

On the brighter side, Brazil's production of fine quality cacao beans is steadily increasing, while Costa Rica has yet to utilize an estimated 90 per cent of its land that is suitable for growing cacao trees. Portugal's little island of São Tomé (illustration, below), off the west coast of Africa in the Gulf of Guinea, maintains its name, "the chocolate island." Its millions of cacao trees continue to contribute chocolate to world markets as they did all through World War II when the output from so many other sources was halted.

NOTE: For additional information, see "São Tomé, the Chocolate Island," in the *National Geographic Magazine* for May, 1946*.

CHRISTIAN DE CATERS

IN A CIRCLE OF SHADE, SÃO TOMÉ PLANTATION WORKERS GATHER THE PERPETUAL CACAO HARVEST

Day in and day out, the year around, cacao pods ripen. One São Tomé plantation alone has more than 3,000,000 trees. Their vivid shades of bronze, yellow, green, and red give an air of Christmas festivity to the landscape of the leaf-shaped island off Africa's west coast. Ridged like a hand grenade—or a squash—cacao pods may weigh several pounds. Nature, to provide that their weight does not drag them from the tree, places them close to the trunk, like coconuts and papayas. These pods were cut down, and split with a machete. The workers extract the pulpy center in which 50 or 60 seeds are embedded. These seeds will be fermented and spread out to dry in the sun, or in hot-air dryers.

her own land, Australia was instrumental in forbidding colonization rights to all except peoples of European stock. Since population-poor Australia could ill afford colonizers and Papua's forbidding geography discouraged others, the territory's European population has yet to reach the 3,000 mark.

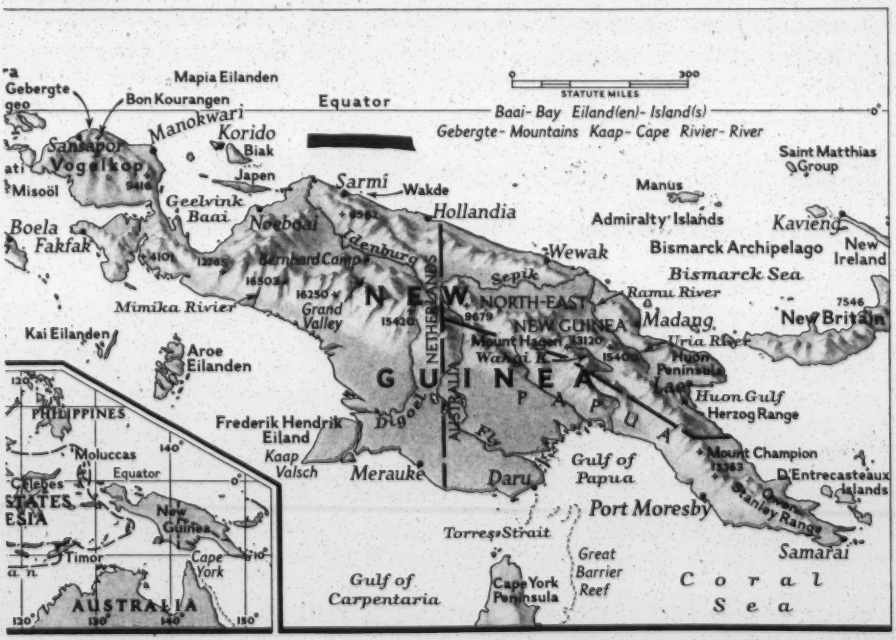
Much has been done in recent years to improve the lot of the natives although contact with large numbers of Allied servicemen during World War II may well effect the greatest change in their lives. Recent news dispatches indicate that the Papuan has acquired a desire for better food and clothing material while demanding the higher wages he earned during the war.

The conflict also stirred up something of a revolution among the women. For the first time in their lives they saw men—white men, at that—working. Travelers say that things have changed around the Papuan home.

NOTE: New Guinea is shown on the Society's map of Southeast Asia.

For additional information, see "Strange Courtship of Birds of Paradise," in the *National Geographic Magazine* for February, 1950; "Sheep Airlift in New Guinea," December, 1949; "New Guinea's Mountain and Swampland Dwellers," December, 1945; "Treasure Islands of Australasia," June, 1942*; and "Into Primeval Papua by Seaplane," September, 1929.

See also, in the GEOGRAPHIC SCHOOL BULLETINS, January 30, 1950, "Sheep Airlift in Bird-of-Paradise Land"; and "New Guinea's Port Moresby Due for Growth," April 11, 1949.



DRAWN BY HARRY S. OLIVER AND IRVIN E. ALLEMAN

IN SIZE NEW GUINEA RANKS FIRST AMONG PACIFIC ISLANDS, SECOND IN THE WORLD

The bird-shaped land mass is larger than the six New England States plus the three Middle Atlantic States plus Maryland and Ohio. Its western half is in contention between the Netherlands and the new Republic of Indonesia. North-East New Guinea and Papua belong to Australia. Mount Lamington, spreading havoc in the Papuan peninsula, is one of the lesser peaks of the Owen Stanley Range. Its elevation of less than 5,000 feet is puny compared with Mount Victoria's 13,363 feet (small cross north of Port Moresby). Lamington lies 40 miles almost straight east of Victoria.